



February 14, 2022

Papamoa Residents & Ratepayers Association Submission:

RE: Bus Lanes in Links Ave and proposal to cul de sac Links Ave. (including alternative roads for Bus Lanes)

The trial 'cul de sac ing" closing of Links Ave was imposed by Tauranga City Council after a Safety Review (commissioned by Tauranga City Council) identified a potential issue between school children and buses using the bus lane. PRRA has also read this report and the report suggests another solution, which is removing the bus lane. PRRA agrees that this is the only solution.

The bus lane was added to Links Ave in 2020 as a trial, overriding community objections. Never in any city has a major bus lane been run through a residential street. It was madness then and is still madness.

This trial cul de sac of Links Ave was done with no consultation with the residents or community. It was an imposition and affront to the community, has been a disaster to the community, -- longer travel times, major inconvenience, more stationary traffic and increased carbon emissions, new safety issues on Oceanbeach Rd.

All the while the "ghost" buses use the Links Ave Bus lane while the community is inconvenienced. These buses are called "ghost" because most are empty. A survey of morning bus patronage on 2 week days between 7.30am to 9 am averaged around 29 bus passengers/day for all the buses travelling down Links Ave.

Papamoa Residents and Ratepayers Association along with MRRRA and TRA using Tauranga Community Feedback website ran an online survey to gather the views of the community and over 1250 people participated. This is an excellent response from very concerned and affected residents.

A full summary of the final comments has been shared by email with Brendan Bisley and the Commissioners. This is real feedback. A point to note is that PRRA had to approach TCC to have these comments included in the trial final feedback report. This survey was well known and communicated to the council, yet TCC did not ask for the results to include. This feedback and comments amount to 94 pages. Are the results not inline to support any TCC decision?

Also, none of the concerned ratepayer groups were approached to take part in the mid pulse analysis of the trial.

Results of the Online Survey re Links Ave

The Online Poll asked 5 questions, included a section to send a message to Brendan Bisley and a general comment section. As reported above, the summaries of the last two sections have been sent to Tauranga City Council.

The summary of results from the survey are

| | |
|--|----------------|
| <i>Do you want Links Ave to be made into a Cul de Sac</i> | No 98% Yes 2% |
| <i>Do you think buses should have a dedicated bus lane in Links Ave</i> | No 63% Yes 37% |
| <i>Do you feel the bus lane should be totally removed</i> | Yes 67% No 33% |
| <i>Would you support a barrier fence to separate buses and pedestrians</i> | Yes 62% No 38% |
| | |

The results are very easy to understand. The community does not want Links Ave to be closed.

Looking at some other important numbers which show the craziness of closing Links Ave:

- 1) From Tauranga City Council numbers

There are around 5500 cars per day using Links Ave.
There are approx. 200 bus passengers per day using Links Ave (including schoolchildren). And an informal bus count showed 29 passengers when schools were closed.

You can not force people into buses. They do not work.

- 2) Looking at the % of time when there are schoolchildren going to and from the school. Assuming 1.5 hours in the morning and 1.5 hours in the afternoon.

The affected time is 6% on a yearly basis.

How does TCC even consider closing Links Ave. The cost to the community is huge.

Going forward...

PRRA has submitted a Petition against the closure of Links Ave last year and expect as part of the petition process

- a) to have a hearing on this issue, to take place in a large enough venue on our side of the harbour. All concerned residents can speak.
- b) To have consultation between the council and community, road users and resident's groups.
- c) To have access to all the Council reports on the cul de sac trial complete with the background data. This needs to be a minimum of one week before any hearing.

Nothing has been heard to date from TCC.

Links Ave is called links because that is what it does ---- it links. It is not a street to be made into a cul de sac.

The first priority for Links Ave is safety for the children

The second priority is amenity for the community

This can only be achieved by removal of the Bus Lanes.

It has been said that the increased car numbers in Links Ave have caused the damage to the road. It is in fact the axle loads from the buses that are doing the damage. From Load Equivalency Factors, an 8 tonne axle load (bus) does more than 3000 times the damage of a 1 tonne axle load (car).

The bus lane in Links Ave is the problem, wrong place, wrong routes, unnecessary routing, too dangerous and currently too many ghost buses – nobody inside.

However, PRRA does agree -- buses are part of the future transport solutions, on the right roads.

So where to ..

There is an opportunity to make additional bus lanes down Maunganui Rd along the B2B, from Baypark to Golf Rd/Hewletts Rd. Think of the success of Auckland Northern Busway. These bus lanes will easily link into the bus lane in Hewletts Rd.

The future express bus traffic is coming from Te Tumu, Papamoa East, Te Puke and further out. Sending these buses down Links Ave or holding them up in the morning slow traffic through the B2B is just plain stupid.

For years, forward thinking community members have been asking for these bus lanes along the B2B and the **naysayers** in the council staff, BOPRC and Waka Kotahi have dominated and won. End result == No bus lanes.

But now is now. Tauranga needs these bus lanes on the B2B. There is room for the bus lanes, a couple of pinch points but very solvable. We fought to retain the underpass at Bayfair not only for pedestrian and cycle access but also to serve as a link between the buses stopping on the slip roads of the Bayfair Roundabout.

Most buses do not need to go into Bayfair, Farm St or Links Ave. Run the buses down the B2B. And this would allow TCC to cancel the expensive proposed bus interchange at Bayfair.

A new solution is at hand, it needs new thinking and a willingness from the incumbents (TCC, WBOPRC and Waka Kotahi) to get out of their silos and work with the community. There is no NO, it is YES.

In December 2021, PRRA launched the idea of the Bus Lanes on the B2B to the Tauranga Commissioners, Tauranga City Council Transport Section, Hon Michael Wood, Minister of Transport, Local Members of Parliament, NZTA/Waka Kotahi CEO and Chair of the NZTA Board and WBOPRC.

The only reply to date is from NZTA/Waka Kotahi. Their reply was extremely dismissive and not at all constructive. Their approach is to pass the parcel of bus lane location between the three agencies – NZTA, WBOPRC and TCC. And when time to do anything has run out, ask the community for feedback. Same approach of denial as the removal of the Bayfair Underpass!!!

We look forward to the opportunities going forward. The community demands to be given a part to play in finding solutions to this problem. We want the council to agree to consult and collaborate with a selection of the residents and road users throughout the problem solving process. We are the people most affected by the decisions the council will be making about this matter!

Closing Links Ave is not a solution, removing the bus lanes is the solution. Relocating to the B2B is the best location.

Thankyou.

Philip Brown

Chair

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Appendix



